

Dear Thespians:-

On March sixth, seventh, and eighth of this year, "Our Lady of Saturday Night" was shown as a "work-in-progress" in New York City, to an audience which included television producers, film producers, film-makers from both here and abroad, and video artists. The work received critical acclaim and was hailed as a kind of land-mark in the area of video-art. Comments ranged from 'brilliant' to a 'work of genius'. Right now the piece is at W N E T, and from there it will go to New York Cable Television, the Whitney Museum and the Museum of Modern Art.

Generally the segments most appreciated visually were those done as dream sequences. In the silent portions, Billie-Marie Gross and Clinton Roberts were greatly admired, and in the sound sequences, Karen Durkot, Helen Foley and Lara Deane were thought to be the best. Technically, the synthesized portions of the work were regarded as exceptional and fascinating.

However, it is now nearly impossible to complete the entire video-tape due to the fact that so many of the former cast and crew have gone their separate ways. Obviously, this is a serious matter because of the weight the work carries and because it is literally a spring-board for so many talented young people, (for example, Karen Durkot was asked recently to seek out agents in order to audition for television, Broadway and off-Broadway theatre). It also remains a crucial quandary because of the artistic ethics involved and the commitment that each of us should feel the need to make to our culture. Not only is it a vast undertaking for those closely involved, but also for the Experimental Television Center as well, and it must be considered, in final analysis, that a work of this nature which clearly defines new forms, new tastes, new thought, new style, and a new approach to the somewhat frustrating puzzle of how to channel our new, rising talents, can neither be over-looked nor left incomplete.

At present the entire Valentino sequence must be scrapped. This was an especially important section of the whole tape because in keeping with the 'motif' idea of the work, it brought to a climax all the various themes that are shown. Within this sequence is the tango on the airplane wing. This alone is such an important visual and stylistic statement that it cannot be 'shelved'. What now remains, therefore, is to seek some sort of alternative which will integrate this episode and the club-foot episode and bring the work to a logical close.

I have conceived, from the comments digested, the notion that our own approach to video is most successful when it deals with a visual stylisation and dialogue in the vein of the 'theatre of the Ridiculous', and have written a brief out-line which will use these techniques. In this way, I feel that we can have a successful finish and incorporate the two former Valentino segments as well.

The story concerns a silent film director who has been placed in a sanatorium around 1928, because of a nervous break-down paralleling the onslaught of the talkies. He is seen, upon his release, by his wife and her best friend, who is a clairvoyant. The old

clairvoyant, acting as a kind of agent, journeys to Hollywood to seek work as rehabilitation for the director. She returns discouraged, but in the meantime has invited a young German actor to stay with the director and his wife. The actor arrives, bringing with him another woman who is a mysterious millionairess with a skull branded on her left cheek. In time, both the director and the actor find that they cannot continue their film careers because of the advent of the talking pictures. The wife falls in love with the actor.

The director, who is haunted by schizoid dreams, begins a script inspired by the actor and knows of the affair, but does not care.

Mysteriously, the actor wires his wife in Berlin and asks for a divorce. At this time, the clairvoyant alerts the producer that the director is writing an inspired script and urges him to visit. Both the actor's wife and the producer arrive. The producer stays in the guest house with security guards, but waits for weeks until the director will show him the script. The clairvoyant slowly becomes a soothsayer for the lot of them, and foresees that the actor's wife must not return to Berlin under any circumstances due to the climate. Privately, she turns the director's wife against him and suggests that she try to lure the actor away. When this fails, the wife becomes desperate. He confesses to her that he is writing no script, and that he and the actor are secretly leaving for Berlin to be subsidised by the German millionairess. The wife tells the producer, who decides it is a good idea for the director to 'get away' and suggests he throw a party. At the party, seeking revenge, both wives conspire to murder the director, believing him to be dressed as a clown. They shoot him, and when he is unmasked, they discover they have killed the producer. Suddenly, the security guards are set on them and they run to the clairvoyant who has gone into a deep trance, foreseeing the holocaust soon to follow.

Running, crazily down the road they meet the car of the millionairess with the actor, the director and the branded lady inside bound for the next liner to Germany. As the security guards surround the women with fierce police dogs (both guards costumed as Pierettes), the director's wife pleads with him not to go because of the clairvoyant's forecast. He says "What difference could it possibly make to me?" and the three drive off.

This is, I feel, an appropriate way of tying up the loose ends of 'Our Lady of Saturday Night', and will bring the work to an effective climax.

Below are the suggested parts.

DIE TUNTEN

("Adeleine in Ruins")

Adeleine Amphion.....(the wife of the director) Billie-Marie Gross,  
Kate Easton, Lara Deane.

Ben.....(the producer) Sam Giovannazo

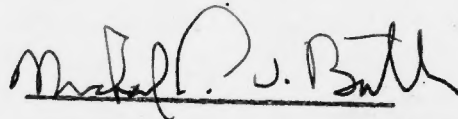
Inez.....(the clairvoyant) Helen Foley

Madame Verowa.....(the millionairess) Norma Lawson, Billie-Marie  
Gross

Zophe.....(the actor's wife) Lara Deane, Billie-Marie  
Gross

(The other parts are all cast. This will be shot during May)

Because of the enthusiastic response given by the German audience,  
I was not only inspired to write this, but will attempt to use a more  
expressionistic approach to this segment (which, too, will save time  
and editing). Please be in touch with me regarding your feelings  
about this idea.



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